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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 005678

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [MOPS](#)
SUBJECT: PAG NOVEMBER 30: TESTING MUSA QALA

REF: KABUL 5584

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Neumann for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (S) SUMMARY: The November 30 PAG focused on the Musa Qala agreement and the need to reach a PAG common line. The PAG reviewed an ISAF paper but put off any decision on it for the following week. We think the paper does not reflect recent intelligence showing that the Taliban are seeking to replicate it. U.S. and ISAF intelligence analysts will discuss the issue further. The PAG agreed to test the agreement based upon a set of GOA-established minimum standards or benchmarks for demonstrating government authority which the government will prepare for the next PAG meeting. Discussion revolved around what to include as benchmarks, with several members cautioning against setting too high a bar. The Ambassador pressed for an Afghan force from outside of Musa Qala to test the agreement and for the GOA to set its own benchmarks for whether the GOA has control independent of the 14-point agreement between Governor Daud and the district elders. The PAG also welcomed the creation of a National Communications Coordination Center to bolster the PAG strategic communications pillar. DCM confirmed that the U.S. would provide resources for the Center. Under the reconstruction and development pillar, Minister Atmar explained that projects were being held up in Musa Qala, not due to a lack of resources, but because Afghan procurement rules require 28 days for tender. COMISAF briefed on preparations for the Kandahar PAG which is intended to bring the message to the people that the GOA is focused on the problems in the South. END SUMMARY

Testing Musa Qala: Seeking a PAG Common Line

12. (S) At the November 30 PAG, NDS provided a briefing on the current security situation in the south, focusing on Musa Qala. NDS presented a mixed picture of increased insurgent activity in the South combined with an uneasy ceasefire in Musa Qala where the situation appears to be relatively peaceful but at the expense of GOA authority.

13. (S) COMISAF Richards called for the PAG to issue a common line on the Musa Qala agreement and circulated a paper for endorsement at next week's PAG meeting. Richards stressed the necessity of having a common PAG view because there were &those who were trying to undermine it prematurely8. He reported that 60 recruits from Musa Qala were now in ANAP training and would be reporting for duty there by the end of December, &doing what we and President Karzai want them to do8. Richards urged the PAG to let the agreement run a bit longer, test it, and then decide. Richards added that he thought the first force of auxiliary police from inside/inside Musa Qala would be ready by the end of December.

14. (S) The Ambassador reminded the PAG that President Karzai had previously stated that we need to test the agreement. He said the PAG should therefore do so in a clear and transparent manner and make its decision public. If the police force going into the district is from Musa Qala, that is acceptable in part, but it should also include some outsiders with arms, representing the authority of the national government, e.g., ANP officers, the Ambassador argued. He said we had to be absolutely clear that we had tested it to demonstrate that it was truly &national8. The Ambassador reiterated the need to augment the ANAP in some manner with those from outside the district. He said it may take some time for this to be decided, since the individuals need to be acceptable to the people of Musa Qala (e.g., not members of a tribal faction with which they were fighting previously), but the key element needs to be clear external presence. If ISAF is six kilometers out, but the Taliban are circling one kilometer inside, then the PAG will need to reserve judgment, he cautioned. The Canadian Ambassador

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agreed and added that since the ANAP are not a force onto themselves, ANP from outside Musa Qala will need to lead the ANAP force.

15. (S) The MOI Deputy Minister explained that the District Police Chief had already been appointed and was from Musa Qala. MOI was now waiting for the list of ANAP recruits from the elders. COMISAF Richards said the process would take three weeks, which meant that we could test the agreement at the end of December and take one month to &prove it8. The EU suggested that the PAG should set a bar, but one not too high compared to other districts. Education Minister Atmar, who was chairing the PAG, proposed that the key benchmark should be &who rules the district8. Other benchmarks would include the judge, police chief, and district administrator, he said while noting that not all districts have judges of their own and this might be asking that Musa Qala reach a level other districts can't. Presidential Palace Chief of Staff Jawed Ludin added that another benchmark should be when the Governor would be able to visit the district.

16. (S) The Ambassador emphasized the importance of setting a minimum standard that would enable us to determine that GOA national authority had been established and urged that this be decided upon at the next PAG meeting based on GOA developed minimum indicators to demonstrate authority, which should not be excessive. Minister Atmar agreed that a set of minimum benchmarks would be developed for the next PAG meeting.

17. (S) Richards said that the PAG needed to look at the 14-point agreement between the Governor and the elders as our reference point. The Ambassador said he hoped Richards was not asserting that the GOA cannot test the agreement outside the 14 points or that any action not covered by the agreement needed to be negotiated. If that was the case, then we would be giving quasi-sovereignty to individual districts.

NEUMANN